

the hands of an engraver of the highest reputation in England, giving him his own terms and his own time, that they had taken all the means in their power to ensure a perfectly satisfactory result.

The engraving for the current year, "The Prisoner of Gisors," by Mr. F. Bacon, after Mr. Wehnert, is at press, and will be ready for distribution in the autumn.

Very considerable progress has been made in the preparation of the illustrated edition of "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," also due to the subscribers of this year, and which promises to be a very satisfactory production. Some of the illustrations already completed may be safely pronounced equal to any similar works ever produced.

"Sabrina," engraved by Mr. Lightfoot, after Mr. Frost, A.R.A., is nearly completed. It is proposed to appropriate this plate to the subscribers for the next year, who will also receive a series of etchings or wood-engravings, not yet decided on.

Mr. W. Finden is proceeding with "The Crucifixion," after Hilton.

For some ensuing year the council have commissioned the execution of several plates on steel, as an experiment to test the advantage of such a course, instead of electrotyping one copper-plate,—the particular print to which each subscriber will be entitled, to be decided by lot. The number of plates required would, of course, depend on the number of subscribers enrolled. The following pictures are already in hand:—

"The Burial of Harold," by Mr. F. R. Pickersgill, A.R.A. (which received the first premium in 1847 from the Royal Commissioners of Fine Arts), to be engraved by Mr. Bacon:

"Richard Cœur de Lion pardoning Godfrey de Bourdon," by Mr. John Cross (which also received a premium from the commissioners), to be engraved in line by Mr. Shenton:

"The Irish Piper," by Mr. F. Goodall, to be engraved by Mr. Edward Goodall.

With a view to the encouragement of lithography, the council have commissioned Mr. H. Maguire to execute a drawing on stone after a picture by Mr. John Tenniel, "St. Cecilia," which has been obtained for that purpose.

The expediency of extending encouragement to mezzotint engraving has occupied the attention of the council on several occasions, and but for the unnecessary interruption to which they have been subjected, they would have been prepared to take some steps in respect of it.

The statue by Mr. Calder Marshall, A.R.A., "The Dancing Girl reposing," to the model of which the society's premium was awarded, has been executed in marble, and is now at the Royal Academy for exhibition. A reduced copy of it has been made by Mr. Cheverton for the purpose of reproducing it in statuary porcelain. Fifty casts of it in this material will be allotted to-day.

The statuettes of "Innocence," executed in porcelain, and appropriated last year, are in course of delivery to the prizeholders.

The casts from the "First Whisper of Love" have been distributed.

The bronzes allotted at the same time, "Iris Ascending," are nearly all in the hands of their owners.

For the current year it is proposed to produce in bronze a bust of her Majesty Queen Victoria, in commemoration of the grant of the charter. The opinion of his Royal Highness Prince Albert being taken, the bust by Chantrey, deposited in Windsor Castle, was adopted as the best, and a cast having been obtained for the society, with her Majesty's gracious permission, it was reduced, and will be executed in bronze forthwith. Thirty of these busts will form part of the distribution to-day.

The council observe with gratification the impulse which has been given to this branch of art by the operations of the society, as well as the increased connection between art and manufactures now becoming everywhere apparent. The shop windows of the metropolis give striking evidence of the endeavour to connect them, if not in all cases of a successful result.

The desire of the council to produce a fine work in cast iron has been frustrated up to this time by delay, attributed to misfortune,

on the part of the sculptor who was commissioned to make a reduced copy of the selected figure, "Thalia," in the gallery of antiquities at the British Museum. The model, which was said to be ready at the date of the last report, has but just now come into their hands, notwithstanding repeated efforts on their part to obtain it earlier. It will be forthwith transmitted to the founders, and the casts will be forwarded to the prizeholders as speedily as possible.

A similar delay has occurred in respect of the "Wren" and "Flaxman" medals, distributed in 1846 and 1847. Unable to obtain the satisfactory completion of these medals, they have been compelled to take them from the artist to whom they had been confided, and to place them in other hands. The council regret that those subscribers to whom these medals, and the statuettes in iron, are due, should be kept from the possession of them: it must be seen, however, that in this, as in other branches of art already alluded to, they are wholly at the mercy of the artists employed. In cases where the mind and hand of the man himself are needed, to calculate exactly the time of completion, without the certainty of health and earnest co-operation on the part of the artist, is impossible. The council have at heart only the interest of art. As they have already had occasion to say to the Committee of Privy Council—it is only by their love of the fine arts, and their desire to advance them in this empire, that they have been led for so many years, and under considerable difficulties, to devote their earnest exertions in carrying out the objects of the society. It is not too much to expect, then, that they should find amongst artists, personally so much interested in the extension of a love of art, the warmest sympathy and the most earnest co-operation. This co-operation the council seek anxiously, but, unfortunately, do not always find.

The Wren medal has been intrusted for completion to Mr. Benjamin Wyon, and is being proceeded with. With the view of lessening the cause of complaint on the part of the prizeholders, to whom this, or the Flaxman medal, is due, it is arranged that they shall be allowed to take the Chantrey or Reynolds' medal in lieu, should they desire to do so.

A die for a medal, commemorative of Hogarth, is in rapid course of execution by Mr. Leonard Wyon (son of Mr. Wyon of the Mint). Thirty impressions of this in silver will be allotted to-day.

It is to be regretted that so little encouragement is given in England to this very important branch of art as to induce few persons to practise it. The council have sought, by public advertisement, to ascertain the existence of capable persons exercising the art, other than those who are already known to the public, but have not succeeded in doing so.

In pursuance of a bye-law alluded to in the last report, which provides that four vacancies in the council shall be declared annually, and four new members appointed to fill them, the council have elected the Lord Compton, Theodore Martin, Esq., Captain Bowater Vernon, and Mr. Sergeant Talfourd.

The number of the council not having yet reached the limit provided by the charter, it was unnecessary for any of the existing members to retire.

The reserve fund now amounts to the sum of 2,867*l*. The council keep steadily in view the importance of obtaining a gallery and other sufficient premises for the purposes of the association, the main object of this fund.

The following is a broad statement of the receipts and disbursements; the items will be, as usual, more particularly set forth when the report is printed.

|  |         |   |   |
|--|---------|---|---|
| Amount of subscriptions .....  | £12,857 | 5 | 0 |
| Set apart for purchase of pictures, busts, statuettes, models, and lithographs ..... | £6,090  | 0 | 0 |
| Cost of engravings, &c., of the year .....   | 3,899   | 1 | 8 |
| Expenses and reserve of 2½ per cent. .....   | 2,868   | 3 | 4 |
|  | £12,857 | 5 | 0 |

The accounts have been audited by three members of the finance committee and two gentlemen from the body of subscribers,

namely, Mr. Hickson and Mr. Erle, to whom the thanks of the council are offered.

The sum of 5,335*l*., set apart, according to the foregoing statement, for the purchase of works of art by the prizeholders themselves, will be thus allotted:—

|                   |     |      |      |
|-------------------|-----|------|------|
| 15 works of ..... | £10 | each | £150 |
| 21 .....          | 15  |      | 315  |
| 18 .....          | 20  |      | 360  |
| 18 .....          | 25  |      | 450  |
| 14 .....          | 30  |      | 420  |
| 14 .....          | 40  |      | 560  |
| 10 .....          | 50  |      | 500  |
| 8 .....           | 60  |      | 480  |
| 6 .....           | 70  |      | 420  |
| 6 .....           | 80  |      | 480  |
| 4 .....           | 100 |      | 400  |
| 2 .....           | 150 |      | 300  |
| 1 .....           | 200 |      | 200  |
| 1 .....           | 300 |      | 300  |

To these are to be added—

30 bronzes of "The Queen,"  
50 statuettes of "The Dancing Girl,"  
30 medals commemorative of "Hogarth," and  
300 lithographs of "St. Cecilia;"—making in the whole 547 works of art.

The total sum appropriated to the purchase and production of works of art, including the cost of the engraving and illustrated book is 9,989*l*.

The bronzes will be allotted to the first thirty names drawn consecutively at the close of the general distribution; the statuettes to the next fifty names similarly drawn; and the medals to the following thirty. The lithographs will be appropriated to the names standing fiftieth and fifty-first in the list after each of the prizeholders in the general distribution, and to the name standing the fiftieth in the list after each of those entitled to a medal. Notice will be sent to the subscribers entitled to the lithographs in the course of two days. The other prizeholders will receive intimation of the result by to-night's post.

With regard to the selection of prizes, the council were given to understand that the difficulty with which information concerning pictures was obtained at the Royal Academy by prizeholders had prevented many purchases there, and had led to the return of fine works to the studio of the artist, which would otherwise have been bought. They accordingly addressed a communication to the council of the Royal Academy, pointing out this fact; that body, in consequence, resolved, that a room in the upper hall should be given up during the exhibition, and that a clerk should be specially employed to answer the inquiries of subscribers to the Art-Union.

To conclude—Art is beginning to re-assume her ancient throne, as a mighty teacher and humanizer,—the interpreter of religion, and recorder and inducer of greatness: but the progress is slow and painful.

The artist requires an appreciating audience,—an enlightened nation—for a patron,—to give him which the public taste must be cultivated and knowledge extended. A constant acquaintance with beautiful forms and harmonious colourings, and an engagement of public interest, will do much towards effecting this. The eye is quickly educated; and even more quickly vitiated. The great obstacle to the progress of the fine-arts amongst us has been the want of sympathy, on the part of the public, with art and artists.

When the multitude feel the power of art, and acknowledge its importance, they will elevate artists; and, in so doing, will further elevate art. "What a different world," says Quatremère de Quincy, "do Raffaele and the grand masters of his time open up to us! How many ideas and images would have been unknown to us had not imitation attained its aim." And again—"What an unfulfilling source of pleasure for the understanding and the sentiment! In short what creations, for the existence of which we are indebted to imitation; not that which is limited to shewing us real, but that which, by the aid of what is, shews us what has no real existence!"

"A form of beauty is a joy for ever." Let us give honour to those who produce it. They are in truth, to use a German phrase, the "world-betterers."

As a nation, we have as yet done little for art. We have built few homes, still less tem-